

Grant Research and Writing



Objectives

You will learn:

- ◆ To identify grant sources.
- ◆ To include elements of a fundable proposal.
- ◆ To develop a strategic plan to solicit funds.
- ◆ To add power and clarity to funding proposals.
- ◆ To perform followup activities.
- ◆ To strategize grant staffing.

Key Points

- ◆ Importance of matching a center's mission and goals with those of the grant source.
- ◆ Developing a strategic plan for funding, including researching funding opportunities, soliciting annual reports from funders, reviewing the annual reports with an eye toward the center's objectives, and developing an approach for selecting funding opportunities that are appropriate for the center.
- ◆ Strategies to assess whether a grant is a match for a center's mission and goals.
- ◆ Proposal structure and guidelines.
- ◆ Techniques to enhance a proposal's clarity and effectiveness.
- ◆ Tips for relationship building within funding organizations.



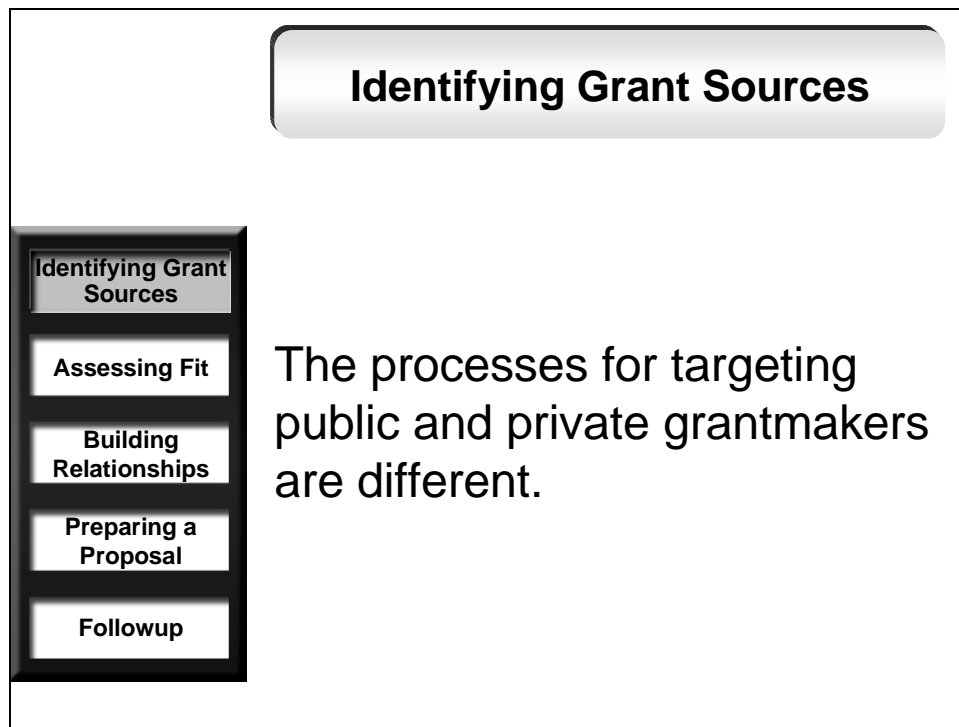
Program Development Materials

Grant Research and Writing

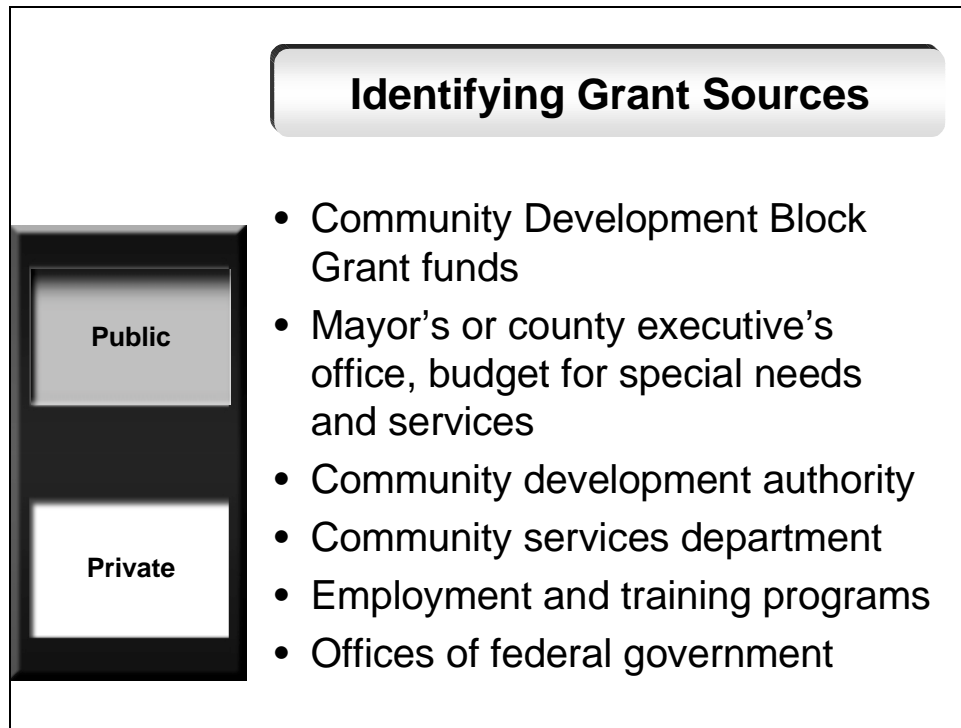
Grants are usually offered by private foundations or government entities and provide money primarily to nonprofit organizations. Applying for grants is an involved process that requires planning and research. There are countless sources of funding available from both public and private organizations, but not all of them may be appropriate for every Neighborhood Networks center. Neighborhood Networks centers must first identify possible sources and narrow the list down according to criteria that identifies compatibility between the center and the grantor. After researching the opportunity, specific guidelines are followed to create a proposal. The last step requires follow-up, whether or not the proposal was accepted.

Neighborhood Networks centers and their partners oftentimes collaborate on applying for grants. Usually, a grant application process requires proof of the Neighborhood Networks center's track record. When considering applying for government or foundation funding, a collaborative proposal with an established nonprofit may be the preferred route. By partnering with another organization, a Neighborhood Networks center can look more attractive to funders.

Identifying Grant Sources

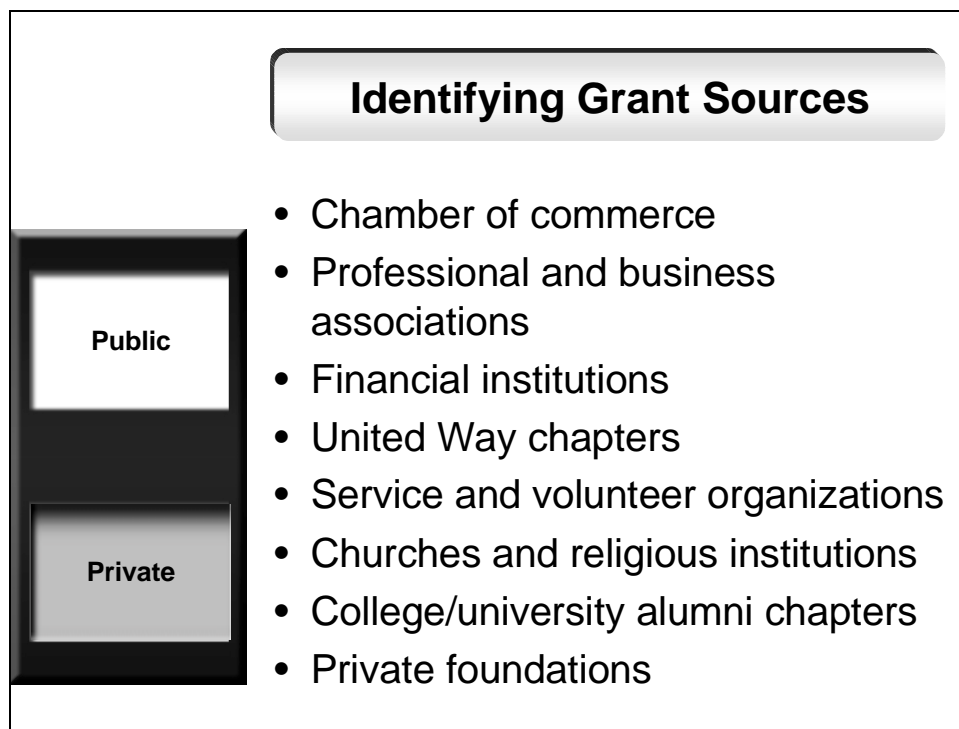


Public



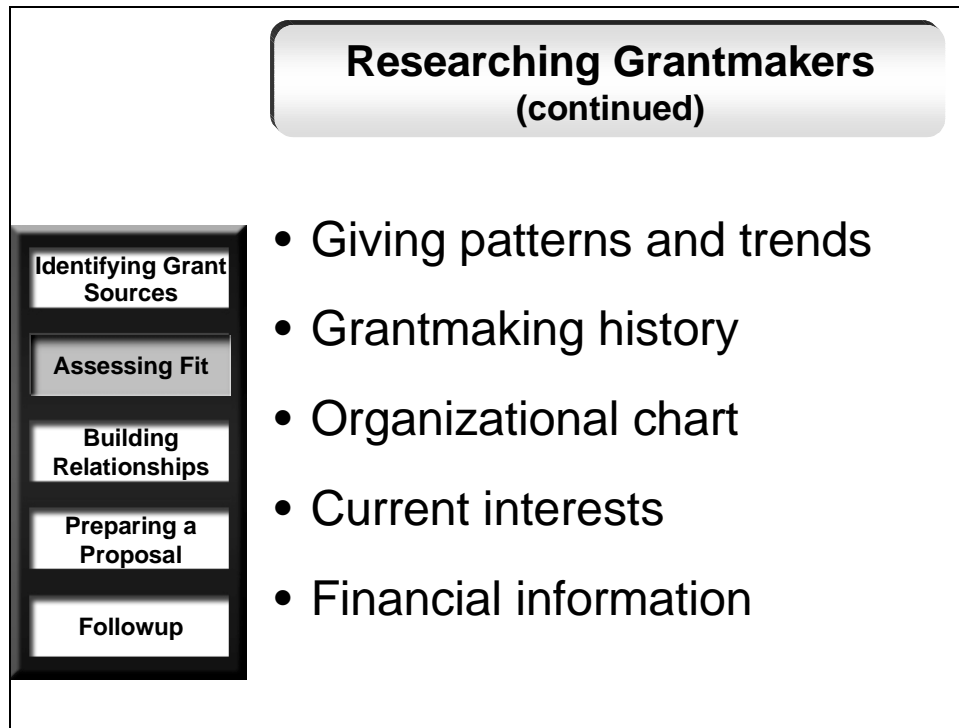
In addition to federal sources, there are several state and local sources for funds. The community development grant block; mayor's or county executive's office budget for special needs and services; community development authority; employment and training programs; and community services department should be contacted for information on potential grants.

Private



Although private foundations are the most prevalent, local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, professional and business associations, financial institutions, United Way chapters, service and volunteer organizations, churches and religious institutions, and college/university alumni chapters can also be valuable sources of information about private grants.

Researching Public and Private Grants



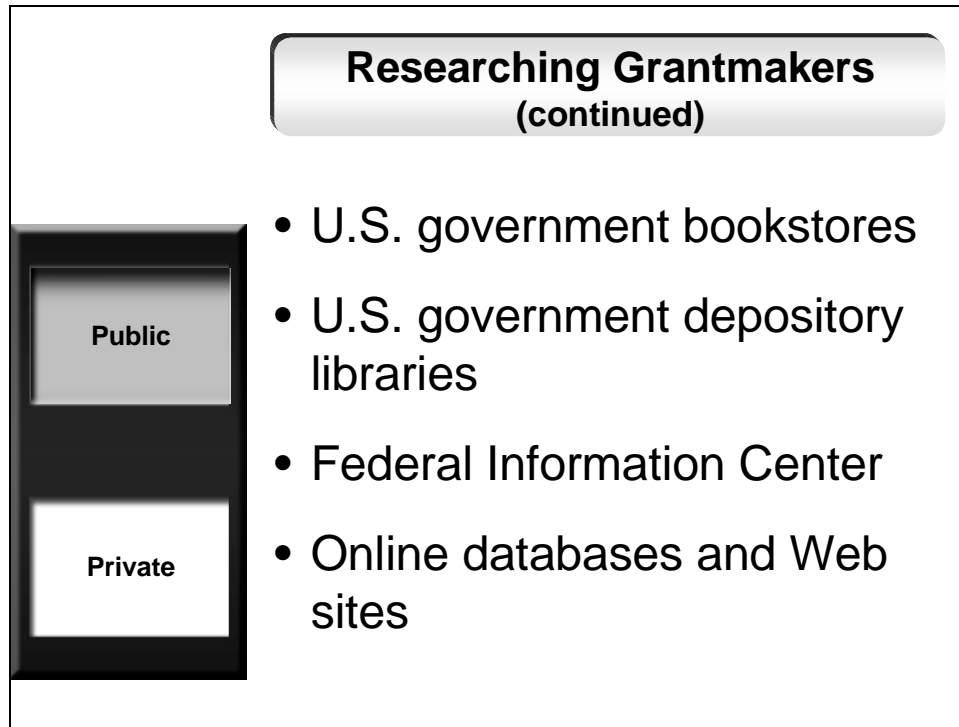
In researching any type of grantmaker, examine giving patterns and trends, discern their grantmaking history. Comprehend the organizational chart and identify the correct program officer to target. Who ultimately decides whether the proposal will be approved? Understand current interests and specific initiatives. What makes your Neighborhood Networks program stand out. How does it fit in with the previously funded projects? What are the grantmaker's total assets? What are the total grants paid? Any information will be beneficial not only for deciding on a fit between the grantmaker and the center, but also for tailoring the proposal to the funder.

Information About Public Grants



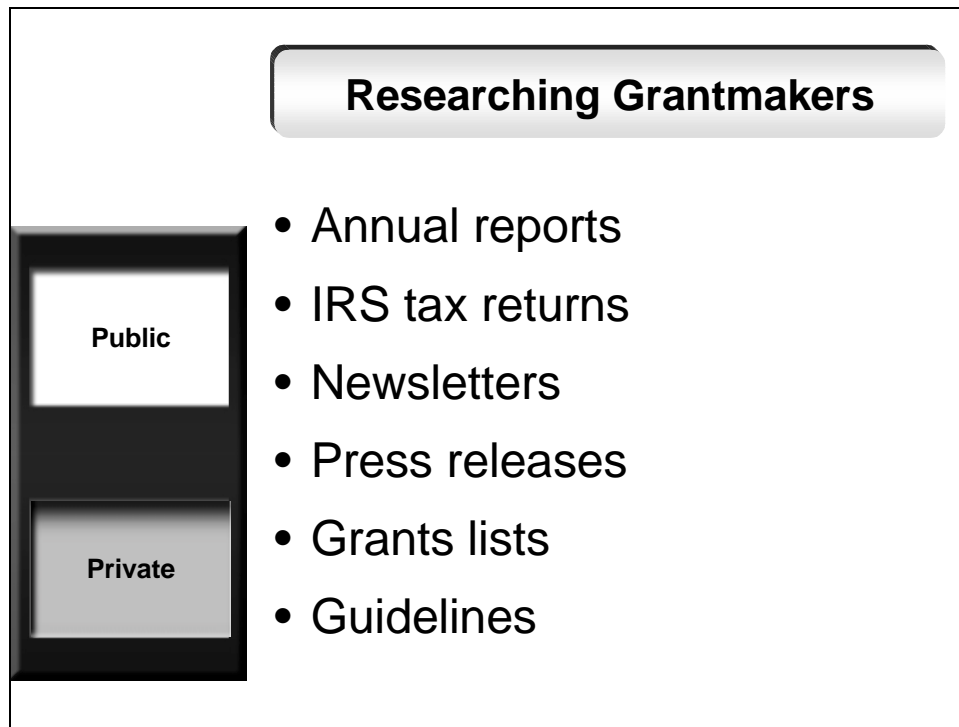
- ❑ *Catalog of Domestic Federal Assistance:* This document offers information about grants and assistance from the federal government. It also provides information about the organizational structure of federal agencies and grant proposal writing.
- ❑ *Federal Register:* The Federal Register is published daily, and in addition to information about public regulations and legal notices, it provides information about grants available from the federal government.

Sources for Information About Public Grants



- ❑ *U.S. government bookstores:* There are 24 regional U.S. Government bookstores. Their locations are available online (see Online Resources). U.S. government bookstores carry resources such as the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.
- ❑ *U.S. government depository libraries:* These libraries provide a variety of resources for those seeking grants, including paper, 24x microfiche, and online versions of the Federal Register. It also carries the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.
- ❑ *Federal Information Center:* The Federal Information Center can be contacted between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. EST at (800) 688-9889 or (800) 326-2996 for TDD/TTY users. The Federal Information Center provides information about the operations and offerings of the federal government, including phone numbers for grant-related information.
- ❑ *Online databases and Web sites:* Government agency Web sites provide information about grants, organization, and other grant-relevant issues.

Information About Private Grants



- ❑ *Annual Reports:* Annual reports are the most accurate and detailed information that can be found about a foundation. Although not all foundations publish annual reports, more than 1,500 did so in 2001. A letter from the president, financial information, program descriptions, grants awarded during the prior year, application deadlines, and lists of trustees, executives, and program staff are typically found in the reports.
- ❑ *IRS Tax Returns:* Every foundation is required to submit an IRS Form 990-PF, which provides basic financial data, a grants list (amount of detail varies from foundation to foundation), the names of the foundation's trustees and officers, and other information on the foundation. Form 990-PF is especially important when researching foundations that have neither web sites nor annual reports. Reviewing several years of tax returns can identify changes in the focus of the foundation and giving trends.

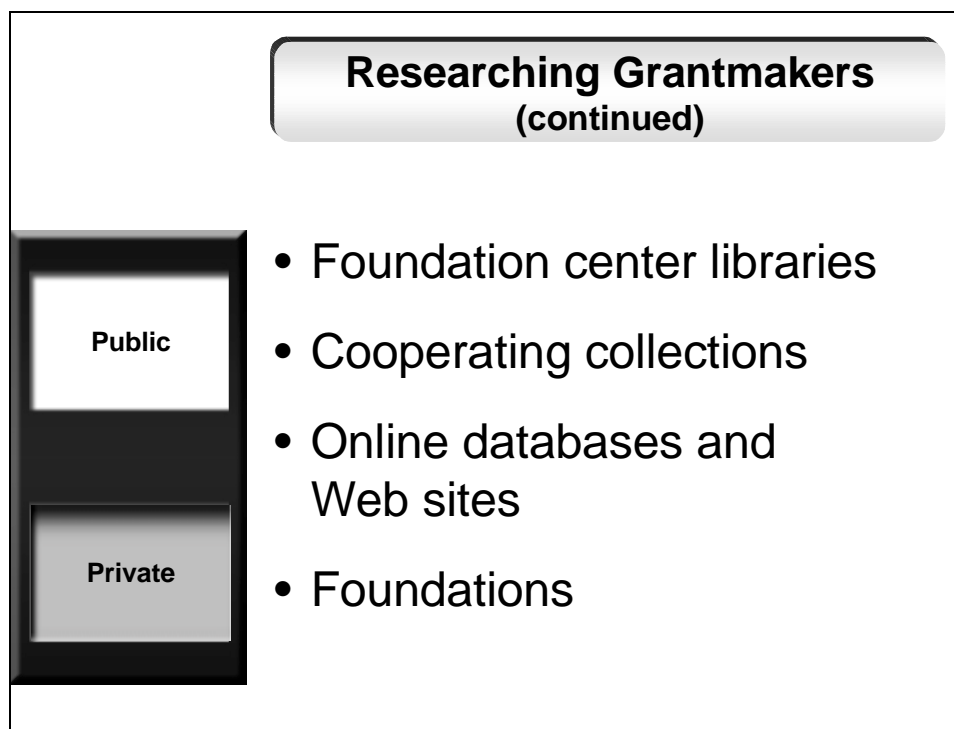
Copies of foundations' IRS Form 990-PFs can be acquired through the foundation's Web site, online databases, Foundation Center libraries, Cooperating Collections, the IRS, state attorneys general, and from contacting the foundation itself. Foundations are required to provide photocopies of their most recent tax returns to anyone who requests them, on a same-day basis for walk-ins and within 30 days for mail-in requests. Please note, however, that this requirement is waived for those foundations that make their returns available through the Internet. To order copies of individual 990-PFs from the IRS for a fee, use Form 4506A, which can be obtained from the IRS by calling (800) 829-8815 or downloaded from the IRS Web site. Training programs on the Form 990-PF are available online and at the Foundation Center libraries and Cooperating Collections.

- ❑ *Newsletters:* Some foundations publish newsletters or "magazines" containing information about recent grants, new directions and changes in board or staff. Grantseekers should

maintain informed of developments within the foundation through publications like newsletters.

- ❑ *Press releases:* Press releases can provide insight on newsworthy events that are valued by the foundation. Similar to newsletters, they may provide information about recent grants, new directions and changes in board or staff.
- ❑ *Grants lists:* Knowledge of recent grants awarded by the foundation can allow grantseekers to ensure that the foundation is a good match. Grants lists can also provide an assessment of the funding level and type of funding of similar projects.
- ❑ *Guidelines:* It is essential that grantseekers consult guidelines for each foundation to ensure adherence to application procedures and deadlines. Guidelines will outline limitations for grants as well as specifications for proposals.

Sources for Information About Private Grants



There are vast amounts of information available to individuals and organizations seeking grants from private foundations. Although most of the materials are found online and are organized into searchable databases, copies can be acquired through libraries and the grantmaking organization itself.

- ❑ *Foundation Center Libraries:* The Foundation Center operates libraries in New York, Washington D.C., Atlanta, Cleveland, and San Francisco. At these locations, grantseekers can access a variety of materials on philanthropy free of charge. Training sessions and assistance from professional librarians provide orientations on obtaining grants. Classroom training sessions include Demystifying the 990-PF, Foundation Fundamentals, Foundations Today, Introduction to Library Resources on Corporate Giving, Proposal Budgeting Basics,

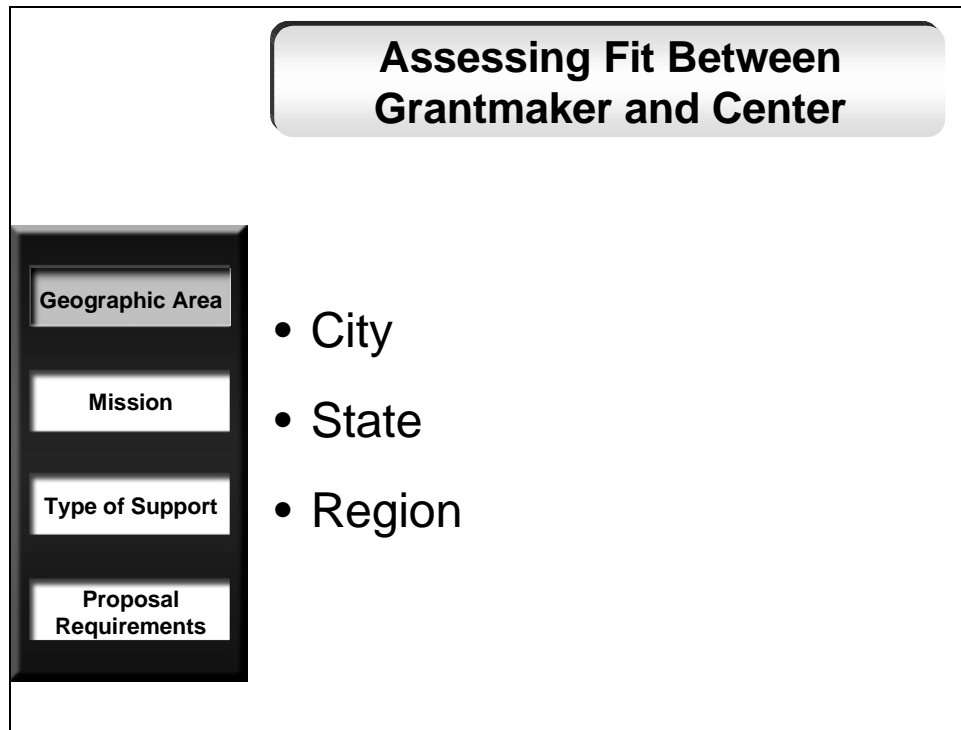
Proposal Writing Basics, Prospect Research Basics: Researching Individual Donors, Dialogue with Donors, and Fundraising Planning.

- ❑ *Cooperating Collections:* Cooperating collections feature a core collection of Foundation Center publications for those who are unable to access them online. IRS Form 990-PF for the state, Foundation Directory, Foundation Fundamentals, Foundation Grants Index, National Directory of Corporate Giving, the Foundation Center's Guide to Proposal Writing, the Guide to U.S. Foundations, Their Trustees, Officers, and Donors, and other publications. Cooperating Collections centers can be found at the Foundation Center Web site or by calling the Foundation Center at (800) 424-9836.
- ❑ *Online databases and Web sites:* These web sites are devoted to informing grantseekers on everything related to obtaining grants. Web sites contain information such as sample grant proposals, foundation research guides, requests for proposals, and foundation basics. In some databases, foundations can be searched by region, name, or category. Some databases even provide access to online courses relating to fundraising and grant writing.
- ❑ *Foundations:* Contact with foundations, either direct or indirect, can glean useful information for tailoring proposals. Foundations may publish annual reports, lists of major initiatives, and grant guidelines that can be found on the foundation web site or requested from the foundation itself. Conversations with program officers at the foundation will unearth additional information. Be careful not to limit prospect lists to foundations that have web sites, however, as only 1-2% of private, grantmaking foundations currently have web sites.

Assessing the Fit Between Grantmaker and Center

Your Neighborhood Networks center will not fit the requirements for all grants. Review grant requirements and information about the grantor to determine eligibility. Of those for which it is a good match, select grants to be applied for. Due to staffing and time constraints, your center will not be able to apply for all grants for which it is eligible. Use the prospect worksheet to determine whether a funder is a good match, while considering the following aspects:

Geographic Area



Some foundations are national in scope, but fund projects in a certain region, state, or even city.

Mission

Geographic Area

Mission

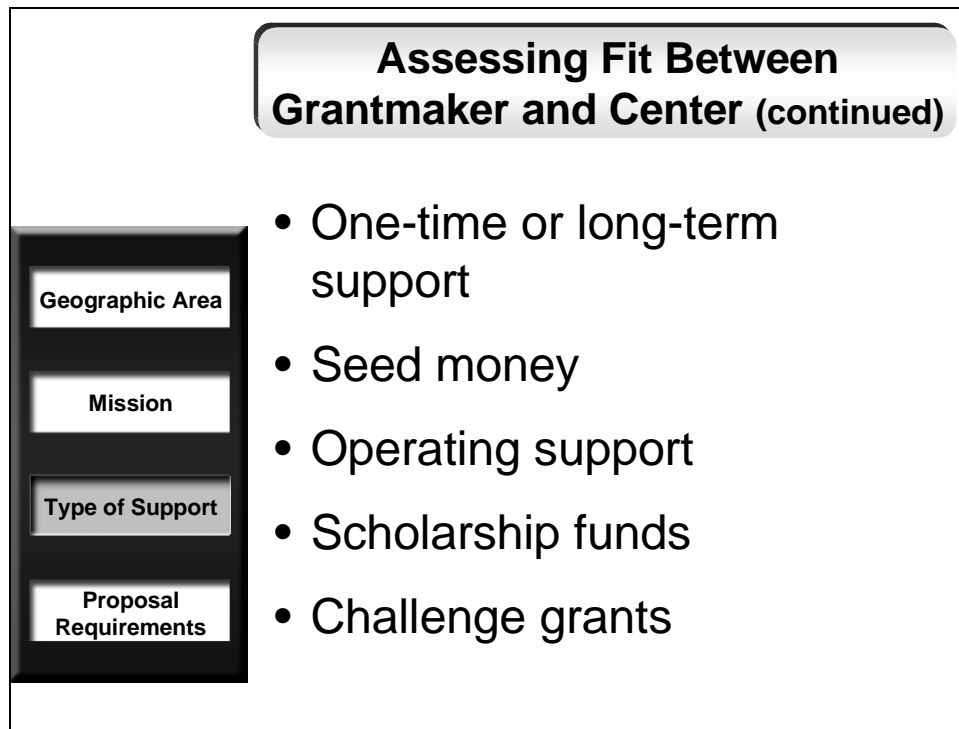
Type of Support

Proposal Requirements

- Subject area
- Mission
- Goals and objectives
- Target population

Target funders that have expressed interest in a specific field that you are working on. Consider foundations whose missions and goals match those of the center. Does the center serve the appropriate target population?

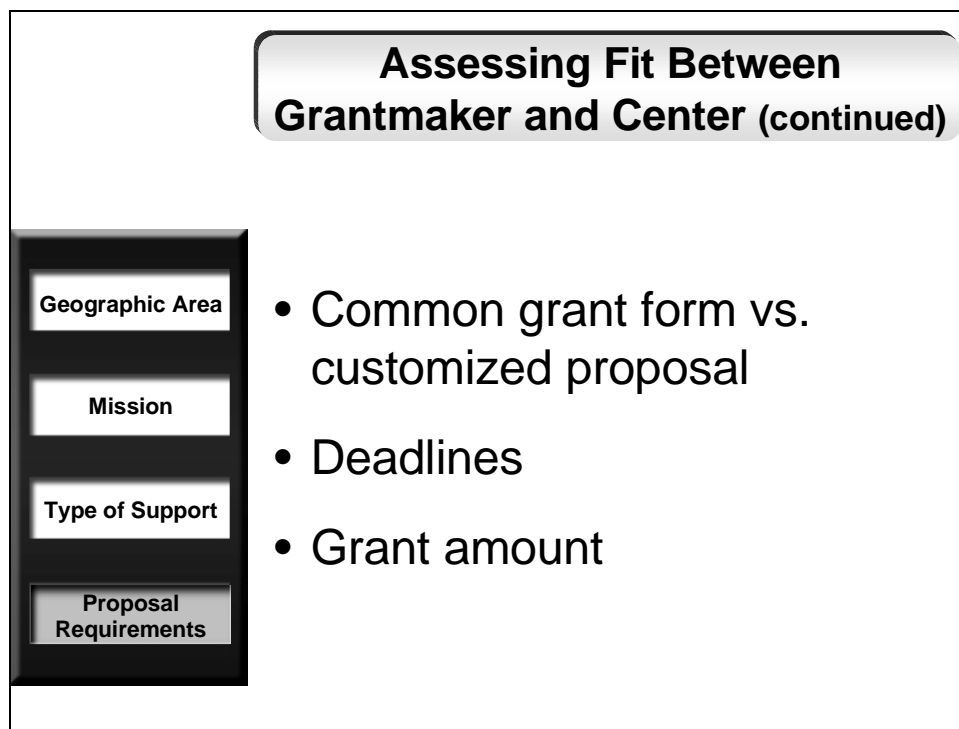
Type of Support



Funding organizations offer various types of support such as:

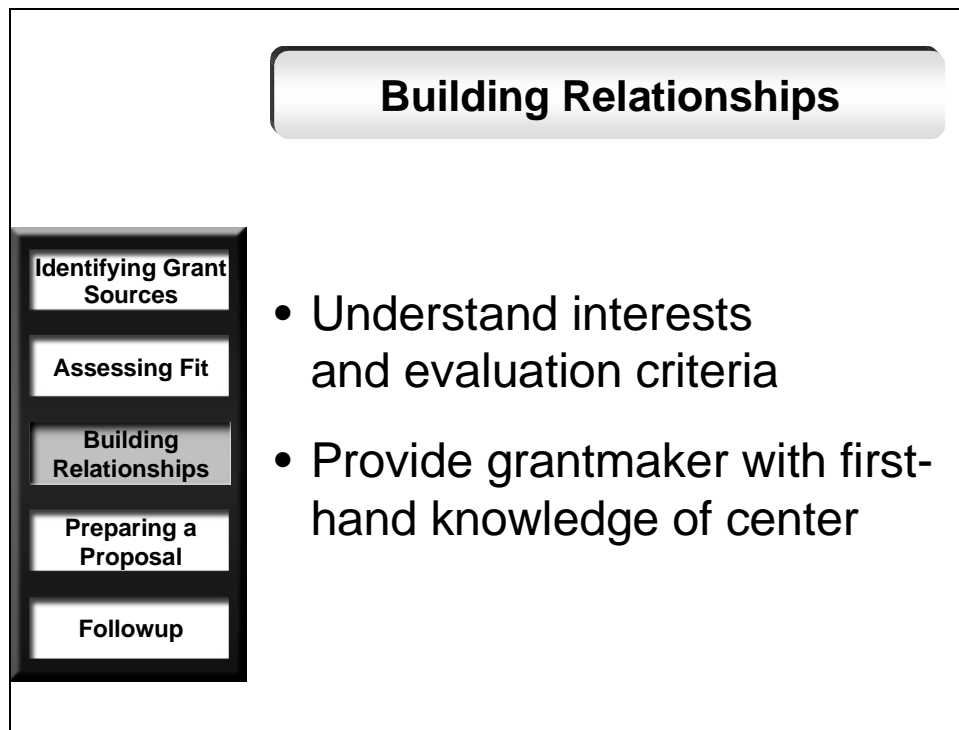
- ☐ One-time or long-term support
- ☐ Seed money: Experimental, innovative, or start-up projects.
- ☐ Operating support: Rather than funding actual programs, these grants offer funds for maintaining the center
- ☐ Scholarship funds: This funding can be applied for training center staff, as well as providing opportunities for residents interested in furthering their educational careers
- ☐ Challenge or matching grants: Grants made in form of a challenge to the organization to raise an equal or specified amount from other sources. This type of grant is contingent upon matching funds being raised.

Proposal Requirements



Does the grantmaker accept a common grant form or must the proposal be customized? How soon is the deadline? More often than not, proposals need to be submitted within a very short time frame. Make sure you have enough time and resources to complete the proposal as late submissions are not accepted. Given the value of your center's human resources, you should also consider whether the amount of funding worth the work required to complete the proposal.

Build a Relationship With the Grantmaker



The next step is to establish a relationship with the grantmaker. This will enable the center to better understand the interests and evaluation criteria for proposals as well as provide the grantmaker with first-hand knowledge of the center's programs and operations.

To be effective, develop public relations materials to introduce the grantmaker to the center and provide them with more information. For a more personal experience, invite funding organizations to participate in center events as well. Your goal is to establish an alliance with the program officer without appearing to be desperate.

Preparing to Write the Proposal

Identifying Grant Sources

Assessing Fit

Building Relationships

Preparing a Proposal

Followup

Techniques to Add Power and Clarity

- Review previous proposals funded by the organization to learn the language and narrative that will persuade them
- Develop proposal themes
 - Relate themes to program benefits
 - Relate each proposal section to themes (use section introductions to weave in themes)

Identifying Grant Sources

Assessing Fit

Building Relationships

Preparing a Proposal

Followup

Techniques to Add Power and Clarity (continued)

- Use headings and subheadings to guide reader
- Be direct, specific, and concise
 - Use active voice and verbs, not nouns
 - Avoid jargon and boilerplate redundancy
 - Use lists and bullets
- Use graphics to communicate, not to impress

Successful proposal writing involves the coordination of several related activities and usually is performed under time constraints.

Before writing a grant application, it is important to think about how you will get funders to know who you are. Relationship building is an essential part of fundraising. You should design an outreach campaign as part of your fundraising strategy to increase the potential funder's awareness of your center and its activities and partners. This outreach campaign may consist of letters or telephone calls to funders introducing your center or formal meetings where you can talk with the funder face to face. Funders are more likely to fund familiar organizations and programs.

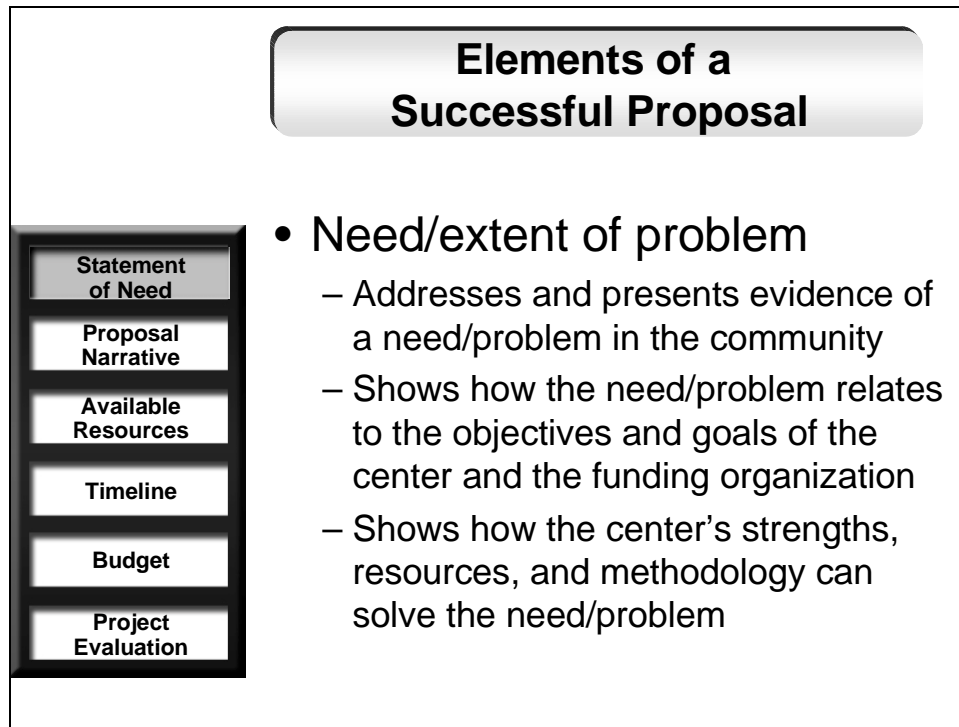
Before you write the proposal, here are a few steps to think about:

- ❑ *Find available funders.* Much of the funding process is research. Use the Internet, especially the Neighborhood Networks Web site, to identify funders online. Look for funders that have qualifications that your center meets.
- ❑ *Obtain proposal guidelines.* It is important to see grant guidelines because every potential funder has a different format, requirements, and proposal process. Proposal guidelines will usually tell you about submission deadlines, eligibility criteria, proposal format, review timetable, budgets, funding priorities, evaluation process, contact information, and other submission requirements. From these guidelines, you should have a clear idea of everything that is needed. It is recommended that you read the guidelines several times. This ensures that you understand the guidelines and helps you identify questions that require clarification from the funder.
- ❑ *Review eligibility requirements.* Be sure that the center or partner serves the appropriate target population, meets the funder's objectives, and is within the funder's geographic boundaries. Determine if the funder requires 501(c)(3) status. If so, make sure the center is eligible. Oftentimes, a center is able to develop a partnership with a nonprofit organization and apply for the grant regardless of the center's status.
- ❑ *Know the submission deadline.* Plan to submit the proposal before the deadline because emergencies can arise. Early submission allows for time to react to such potential disasters as a computer's crashing or printer's not functioning. Make sure that you leave enough time for the funder to receive the application. Some proposals can be e-mailed, but others must be mailed. Build delivery time into your timeline.
- ❑ *Determine personnel needs.* More often than not, proposals need to be submitted within a very short timeframe. Make sure you have enough time and resources to complete the proposal because late submissions usually are not accepted. If your center is partnering with other organizations on the proposal, confirm who will lead the effort. It runs much smoother if one person is in charge.

Additional Proposal Material

It is important to think ahead about additional materials supporting your grant proposal that the funder may require. If you are partnering with an organization, make sure they know the requirements as well.

- ❑ Supporting materials include letters of endorsement, staff résumés, and exhibit charts. The guidelines identify what is needed for each proposal.
- ❑ Proposals typically require the signatures of board members or the executive director. Review the proposal guidelines to determine the signatures that are needed and allow enough time to obtain them.

Statement of Need

The first part of the proposal narrative is the statement of need. This is what funders will read first so an effective statement of need will stick with them. Many funders will only remember what was written at the beginning of the proposal, so make sure it is convincing and unforgettable. The statement should:

- ☐ Clearly and concisely describe the purpose of the project.
- ☐ Focus on the funder's objectives and list your project's goals and measurable objectives.
- ☐ State why the project should be supported and provide facts and figures to support your claim.
- ☐ Meet the funder's required length. Except in brief proposals, statements of need are generally one to three pages in length.

Proposal Narrative

Statement of Need

Proposal Narrative

Available Resources

Timeline

Budget

Project Evaluation

Elements of a Successful Proposal (continued)

- Capacity of applicant/organization
 - Depth of experience
 - ▲ Has the center successfully administered this or a similar type of program before?
 - ▲ What are the qualifications of the center's proposed key personnel?
 - Breadth of experience
 - ▲ What are the qualifications of the proposed program staff?
 - ▲ Will enough resources be devoted to the program to meet its goals?

Statement of Need

Proposal Narrative

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Project Evaluation

Elements of a Successful Proposal (continued)

- Soundness of approach: program objectives
 - Benefits or positive changes for individuals or groups who participate in program
 - Clear, measurable, realistic, practical
 - Relate to the need/problem identified
 - Relate to the goals and objectives of the center and the funding organization

Elements of a Successful Proposal (continued)

Statement of Need

Proposal Narrative

Available Resources

Timeline

Budget

Project Evaluation

- Soundness of approach: methodology
 - Clearly states who will do what when
 - Justifies why approach will achieve objectives of RFP
 - Accounts for unanticipated events that may change scope of program
 - Provides specific management plan by task for period of performance

After completing the statement of need and describing the project and why it should be funded, you need to discuss how the center plans to implement the project. This is the section of the proposal called the narrative. Overall, the narrative should:

- ☐ Describe the method and process of accomplishing your goals and objectives.
- ☐ Describe the scope of work with the expected outcomes.
- ☐ Outline proposed activities.

This section of the proposal is often seen as the most difficult, but is similar to drafting a center business plan. If the center is partnering with other organizations on the grant proposal, this would be an opportune time for a brainstorming session. Either way, make sure you know the center's resources and your ability to conduct the proposed work.

Available Resources

Statement of Need

Proposal Narrative

Available Resources

Timeline

Budget

Project Evaluation

Elements of a Successful Proposal (continued)

- Leveraging
 - Shows ability to combine community and HUD resources
 - ▲ Financial and in-kind resources
 - ▲ Reflected in budget and well-documented
 - Commitment letters
 - ▲ Name of partner agency/organization
 - ▲ Proposed level of commitment
 - ▲ Sources of funds
 - ▲ Signed by official with legal signature authority

Statement of Need

Proposal Narrative

Available Resources

Timeline

Budget

Project Evaluation

Elements of a Successful Proposal (continued)

- Soundness of approach: future funding
 - Presents specific plan to obtain funding if program is to continue beyond grant period
 - Describes how other funds will be obtained
 - Identifies other potential funding sources
 - Does not rely on future grant support
 - Does not indicate that the center will approach donor for additional money

Elements of a Successful Proposal (continued)

Statement of Need

Proposal Narrative

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Project Evaluation

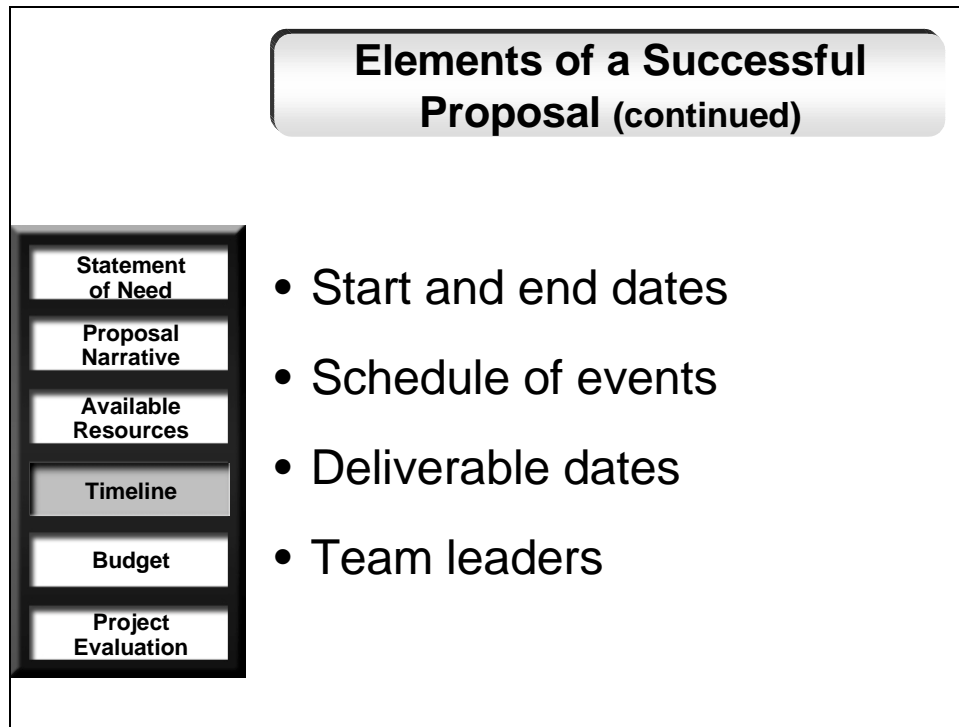
- **Comprehensiveness and coordination**
 - Shows how the program will be linked to other activities and organizations
 - Identifies the center's partners and shows that they have a solid track record
 - Shows type and caliber of support from local government agencies, public officials, and community-based organizations

The proposal narrative should detail the resources available to assist you with implementing your project. What staff, partners, or other funding resources do you have that will allow you to accomplish your goals? Consider how much of a person's time would be required to implement the project as this will determine what resources are needed.

Use START for help with this section. If you have completed START, then you should already know the funding you receive and how your staff is utilized. For more information, visit the START home page at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org.

This is also where you should identify key staff, staff roles, and credentials.

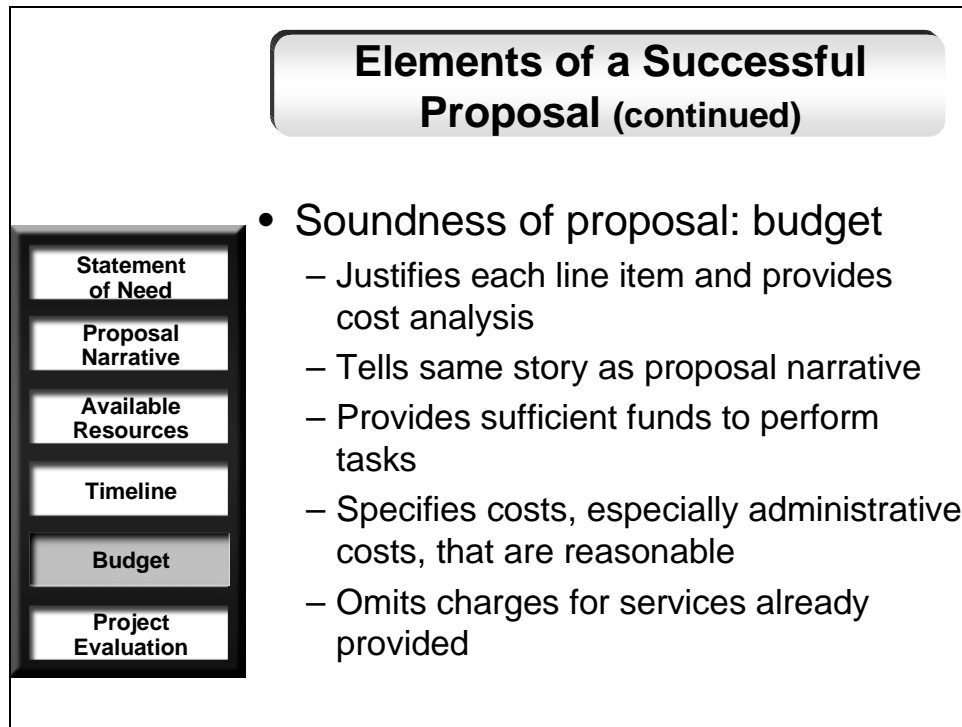
Timeline



The last part of the proposal narrative is the timeline. This is important because it shows funders your thought process and how quickly you believe you can complete certain tasks. The timeline should include:

- ☐ An outline of start and end dates.
- ☐ Schedule of events.
- ☐ Projected outcomes and deliverable dates.
- ☐ Sub-project team leaders (if partnering with other organizations).

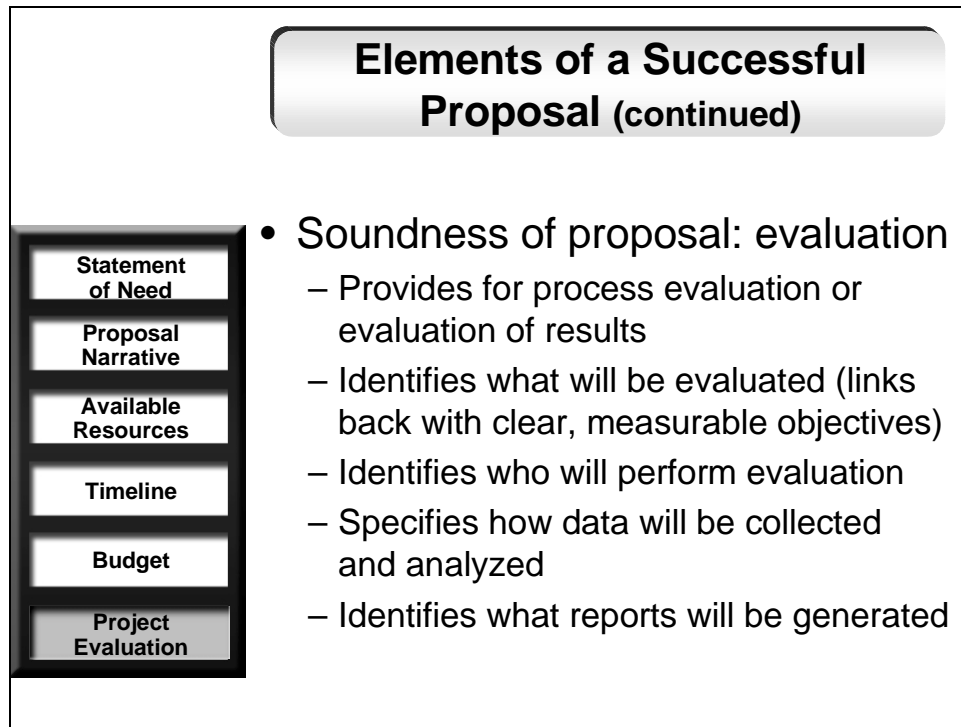
Proposal Budget



The budget is the cost projection that tells how projects will be implemented and managed. Budgets should include all sources of income and expenditures for the center (as well as its partners, if applicable), including in-kind donations and matching revenue.

The proposal budget should be linked to the project description. Any gaps between the proposal budget and project description should be explained. Funders evaluate proposal budgets to determine if the project can be accomplished within budget, if the costs are reasonable, if the budget is consistent with the proposed activities, and if there is sufficient detail and explanation in the budget.

Project Evaluation

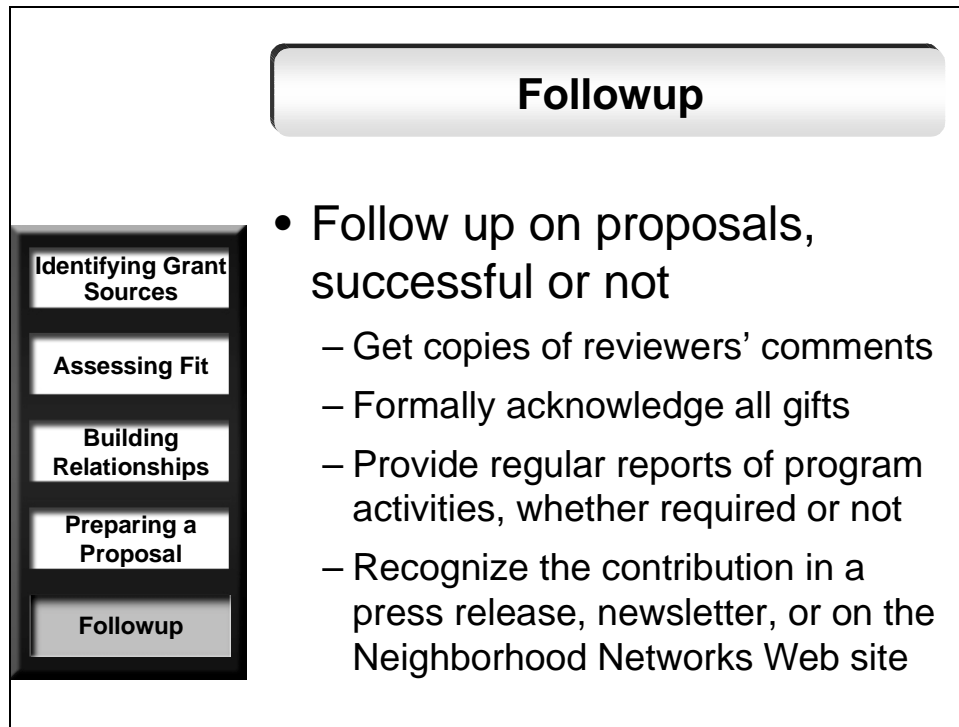


How will you determine if the project is a success? How will you convince your funder of success?

Building in an evaluation component into both the project and the grant proposal will help you and your funder answer these questions. Evaluation is important because most private and public grantors require it. It is also important because it helps you prove the value of your project to existing and potential funders.

Evaluation mechanisms should be linked to the project description. You should take the evaluation to the next level—and impress your funders—by providing them with the results of the service you provided and the long-term impact of the project.

Sending It Off and Following It Up



Once you submit the proposal, make sure that it arrives at its destination on time. For e-mail submissions, select the return receipt option; for mail submissions, track the package via the Internet, via the carrier, or by telephone via the shipping company.

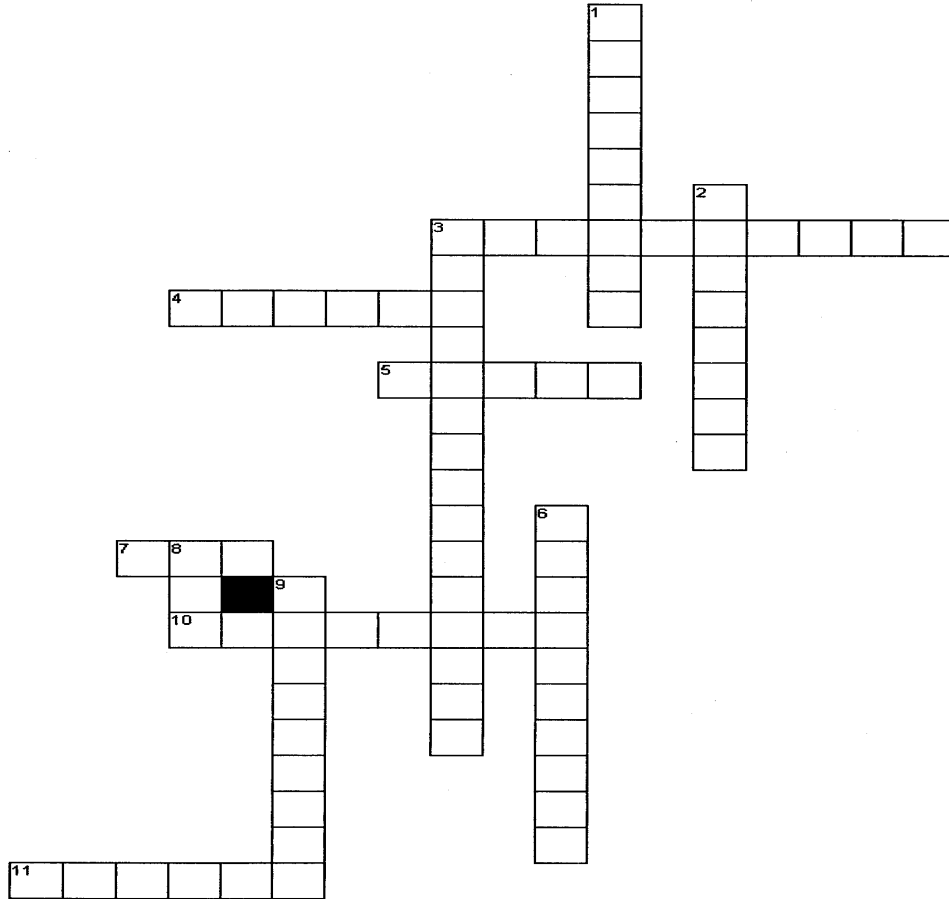
After you have successfully submitted the proposal, your work is not yet done. Be sure to contact the funder to find out about the status, evaluation, or outcome. Request feedback from the funder about the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, if this information is available. Inquire about official proposal debriefings offered by government funders. Remember to send a thank-you letter or call the funder if your proposal is funded.

It is important to keep funders involved with center activities to increase chances of future funding. It is very important to recognize funders as partners and maintain the relationships established with them.



Activity

Words for the GRANT Wise



GRANT Wise Clues

Across

- 3. The most well-known type of private grantmaker
- 4. A noncash donation
- 5. Money given to support the work of an agency, organization, or individual
- 7. The agency to contact about Form 990s and tax returns
- 10. A written application to request a grant
- 11. A summary of income and expenditures for a given period. Also, a component of a grant writing proposal

Down

- 1. Funding for startup projects
- 2. This can be searched online for information about private funders
- 3. Published daily, this provides information about federal grants
- 6. A measure of success
- 8. A solicitation by a grantor seeking applications from potential grantees
- 9. A charitable, tax-exempt organization



Online Resources

www.npguides.org/

This comprehensive guide provides centers with a 10-step process on writing effective grant proposals. Samples are included.

<http://members.dca.net/areid/proposal.htm>

This guide offers tips and how-tos for grant proposals, including structure, planning, and presentation.

www.uwosh.edu/departments/grants/tips.html

Produced by the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, this document explains how to create a concept paper to use as a solicitation tool.

www.wested.org/tie/granttips.html

This quick list of do's and don'ts provides practical tips on proposal development.

<http://fdncenter.org/>

This site is a one-stop shop for fundraising. Offerings include free newsletters on RFP announcements and grant news, a comprehensive foundation search, information about free online and in-person training courses relating to fundraising topics, a guide to the Form 990, a glossary of philanthropic terms, sample grant proposals, and a listing of over 200 non-profit resource centers nationwide that provide access to fundraising information

<http://www.communityfoundationlocator.com/search/index.cfm>

This searchable database contains a listing of community foundations by state

http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/locators/findlibs/index.html

This site features a listing of all federal depository libraries by state.

<http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/resources/Funding/moneynet/index.asp>

This site features a database of more than 700 foundations that specialize in community development projects.

<http://www.cfda.gov/federalcommons>

The Federal Commons, an Internet grants management portal, provides grant information from federal agencies on over 20 topics, including community development, cultural affairs, education, health, business and commerce.

http://www.innonet.org/workstation/grant/select_desc.cfm?org_prog_id=23167

This page is a tool for applying for grants using common grant applications for the National Network of Grantmakers and several state grantmaker organizations.

<http://ocd.usda.gov/nofa.htm>

This page allows users to generate a customized listing of NOFAs (Notices of Funding Availability).

<http://www.nonprofit.gov/>

This site includes links to Federal Web sites and information about their grant programs.

<http://www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm>

This site offers links to many state and local government sites online.

<http://www.firstgov.gov>

This site offers links to national, state, and local Web sites that are helpful for finding more information on those organizations.

<http://www.fundsnetservices.com/found-aa.htm>

The Foundation List Online is a valuable tool for conducting online research of foundations.

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/heritage/ComPartnE/specev1.htm>

The Philanthropy News Digest provides media coverage of donors and their gifts through a searchable database

<http://www.internet-prospecter.org/index.html>

A collection of links and guides to research on individuals and companies, including articles on strategies, links to address/telephone locators, and a guide to fundraising information using search engines

<http://www.grantsmart.org/>

This site features a searchable database containing information on IRS Form 990-PFs.

<http://www.nptimes.com/>

This site, the Non-Profit Times, is an online business publications for non-profit organizations that sometimes contains articles on fundraising.

<http://indorgs.virginia.edu/portico/nonprofits.html>

Portico, University of Virginia's prospect research page, lists state and regional resources, with links to grant and foundation news sites

<http://www.guidestar.org/index.jsp>

This resource for grantmakers provides information about potential grant seekers. Register your non-profit center in the national database of non-profit organizations.

[http://www.nasconet.org/stories/storyReader\\$8](http://www.nasconet.org/stories/storyReader$8)

This site lists U.S. State Charity offices by state.

<http://www.fundsnetservices.com>

This site provides info about fundraising resources online, including grantwriting resources, government funding, youth foundations, community foundations, regional funders, list of foundations online.

<http://www.sera.com/sera/knowledge/knowledgewindow.php?sid=51>

This page of the SERA web site provides a glossary of government terms that relate to fundraising.



Presenter Biography

Lorraine D. Lawrence-Walls is a National Neighborhood Networks government technical monitor for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Lawrence-Walls has been the Neighborhood Networks coordinator for the Houston Office since 1995. Her focus has been grant management, leadership training, and community building. Other notable positions have been vice president of the Houston Area Urban League, assistant chief of the Tenant participation and Training Division for the New York City Housing Authority, and member of the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board. Lawrence-Walls has been a national trainer, national and local grant reviewer, grant monitor, team leader, and training developer/coordinator for HUD. She holds a bachelor of arts degree with honors from Fisk University in public administration and a Juris Doctor degree with a concentration in Landlord-Tenant law from Howard University's School of Law.